

Sunday, March 22, 2015

Kinder Morgan comes to Merrimack for pipeline meeting

By TINA FORBES

Staff Writer

IF YOU GO

Informational meeting on proposed natural gas pipeline.

WHEN: 8 p.m. Thursday.

WHERE: All-Purpose Room, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

MERRIMACK – Residents will get the chance to speak with Kinder Morgan representatives about the natural gas pipeline poised to cut through Merrimack pending federal approval.

A public meeting scheduled for 8 p.m. Thursday at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School will include a presentation by Kinder Morgan, followed by a question-and-answer period.

The proposed Merrimack pipeline comprises a segment of the Northeast Energy Direct Project developed by the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co., a subsidiary of Kinder Morgan. If passed, pipeline construction would run through more than 4 miles of Merrimack, affecting 61 landowners and crossing through Gilmore Hill Memorial Forest and Horse Hill Nature Preserve.

Merrimack officials have been seeking a public meeting with Kinder Morgan since declining a private meeting in December.

Town Council members have also reached out to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to schedule another public informational event called a scoping meeting.

Led by FERC, a scoping meeting would bring commission officials to Merrimack to hear from residents.

“Those are the most important meetings you can attend, even more important than the Kinder Morgan meetings, because these are the regulatory guys,” Town Manager Eileen Cabanel said at a Feb. 26 Town Council meeting.

FERC has the final say as to whether the pipeline project can proceed. Local officials cannot directly approve or deny the pipeline, but can facilitate information, such as environmental studies, getting FERC to help the agency make its decision.

Council members sent a request for the meeting on March 11.

The proposed route for the pipeline enters the state in Cheshire County and heads east into Hillsborough County, going through Greenville, Mason, Brookline, Milford, Amherst and Merrimack, crossing under the Merrimack River into Litchfield and Londonderry before heading to Dracut, Mass., to meet with a compression station.

The 36-inch pressurized natural gas pipeline originates in Pennsylvania and would travel through New York, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and back to Massachusetts. The pipeline does not have an access point in Merrimack.

Kinder Morgan currently operates about 50 miles of gas pipeline in New Hampshire.

The previous proposed route would have affected Hollis, including the Beaver Brook Association, but the plan was nixed following opposition from residents and officials.

Tina Forbes can be reached at 594-6402, tforbes@nashuatelegraph.com or @Telegraph_TinaF.